Master Thieves Stole the Constitution

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J.B. Shurk | AmericanThinker.com

Everyone has a favorite adventure novel or movie in which a daring thief swaps something of immense value with something terribly fake. A forged painting hangs in lieu of the original on a museum wall. A bag of sand takes the place of a bag of jewels inside a pressure-sensitive safe. Lead bars are substituted for gold b

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The American people are the victims of a similar kind of heist. Over the last century, master thieves have stolen their freedoms, representative government, and constitutional protections. Cheap knockoffs have replaced priceless American treasures.

The U.S. Constitution makes no mention of the Central Intelligence Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Environmental Protection Agency, or the Internal Revenue Service. It says nothing at all about the hundreds of other administrative agencies and regulatory bodies that compose the federal bureaucracy. On the contrary, the Constitution is a blueprint for a small government with limited powers. Those powers are explicitly enumerated, while all other powers are explicitly reserved for the American people and the individual states.

This is not an accident. The Founders understood that powerful central governments are more dangerous than powerful foreign invaders. The latter can be confronted and repelled, whereas the former operate in the shadows and destroy a nation from within. The Constitution is specifically designed to protect Americans from faceless bureaucrats snooping on their affairs, regulating their lives, and punishing them for contesting the whims of government agents. How incredibly strange it is, then, to watch cable news shows lamenting President Trump's efforts to dismantle that vast administrative state in D.C. today. Twenty-first-century "journalists" are more concerned with protecting an unconstitutional bureaucracy than protecting the American people from regulatory despots and cubicle kings.

After President Trump's victory over Hillary Clinton in 2016, The Washington Post reclaimed the slogan "Democracy Dies in Darkness," a not-so-subtle rebuke of the new president. The Post's implication was that President Trump would govern in secrecy while curtailing freedom of the press. Just the opposite occurred. Trump held regular press conferences, engaged with reporters at all hours of the day, opened up White House meetings to news crews, and constantly sparred with ideological opponents on social media. Far from stifling press freedoms or threatening dissent, President Trump invigorated both. Ironically, it was not the president who curbed the free speech of others, but America's most powerful social media companies that quickly banned *his* accounts and censored *his* messages (as well as those of his

supporters). If “democracy dies in darkness,” Twitter, Facebook, and Google dealt the deadly blow.

But there is something even more diabolically twisted about the Post’s inane posturing. If “democracy” is understood as the people’s control over their system of government, and if the people’s control over their government requires enough light for them to see what is going on, then anything remotely resembling “democracy” in America died long ago.

The CIA and a couple dozen other intelligence agencies conduct foreign policy in absolute secret. Black budgets hide how taxpayer dollars are spent. Intelligence Community chiefs influence international relations in unknown ways. Faceless spies foment rebellions, topple foreign governments, and execute consequential operations without ever consulting the American people, let alone asking for their permission. This is the definition of *civic darkness*.

Most corporate news “reporters” and credentialed members of the federal bureaucracy would insist that powerful spy organizations operating in total darkness are absolutely necessary in the modern world. Perhaps that is so, or perhaps it is far easier for the federal government to do what it wants all over the world when what it does is kept secret from the American people. Perhaps it is easier for mainstream “journalists” to remain relevant when they act as mouthpieces for and assets of the Intelligence Community. What is clear, though, is that American voters have absolutely no control over the direction of their government when their government hides its actions from the public.

The most powerful people in America’s permanent government have spent the last few years claiming that Russia must be defeated in Ukraine. Why? *Because the Russians are bad and Vladimir Putin is authoritarian, of course! Because freedom must be defended and Ukraine’s borders must be secured!* Perhaps such trite arguments would have been convincing during the Cold War, but the world has changed considerably over the last thirty years. Why should Americans defend Ukraine’s recently constructed borders when the federal government and the United Nations have encouraged tens of millions of illegal aliens to disregard America’s borders? Why should Americans fight to protect Ukraine’s freedoms when the Bill of Rights has been under sustained attack in the United States?

It's difficult for the Establishment to persuade Americans to view Putin as an existential threat to their safety when most of the Establishment is right now in bed with the Chinese Communist Party. If Vladimir Putin is a murderous dictator, then so is Xi Jinping. The Chinese president tortures Christians, throws dissidents in labor camps, and is arguably guilty of genocide. Why should Russia's threats to human liberty be a cause for war, when China's threats to human liberty receive a global shrug? Such double-standards strike the American people as disturbingly odd.

Maybe there are other reasons. Maybe the United States operates bioweapons labs in Ukraine, as has been alleged. Maybe Ukraine's rare earth metals are crucial for America's economic future. Maybe the European Union and U.S.-NATO are desperate to control trade routes from Asia through the Black Sea. But if there are other, more salient reasons for the U.S. to tiptoe toward WWIII by fighting the Russians in Ukraine, the American people have been kept entirely in the dark. How can citizens make good decisions when their government's foreign policies are shrouded in secrecy? They can't.

Are there matters of national security that any competent government must keep secret — even from citizens in a "democracy"? Probably. But after being led into war under false pretenses far too many times, the American people are rightly skeptical when the news media and the federal bureaucracy join hands and cheer for bloodshed.

If the federal government kept Americans in the dark primarily during times of war, perhaps such anti-democratic behavior could be grudgingly accepted as temporarily necessary. But the problem is far worse than that. Just as the Intelligence Community insists that it alone has the expertise to conduct foreign affairs, the various appendages of the labyrinthine administrative state all claim to possess sufficient expertise to justify bureaucratic decision-making irrespective of the American people's wishes.

The Environmental Protection Agency knows what's best for your land. The Department of Education knows what's best for your children. The Department of Health and Human Services knows what's best for your body. Should you disagree with their "experts," the Department of Homeland Security is eager to censor your social media messages as "disinformation." Should you decide to defend your family

and property from government intrusion, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives is ready to commandeer both. The Transportation Security Administration keeps a naughty list of citizens whose luggage must always be tossed. The Federal Bureau of Investigation loves to organize pre-dawn raids of citizens who too publicly oppose government overreach. Unelected government bureaucrats advise citizens which parts of the Bill of Rights remain in effect.

However else this system of government is described, it cannot accurately be called "representative," "constitutional," or "democratic." It is not of the people, by the people, or for the people. It is of, by, and for the bureaucrats. It is a system that operates in secrecy and justifies its secrecy as the prerogative of "experts." It looks nothing like the U.S. Constitution. It is a cheap and unimpressive forgery.

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